

March 19, 2012

To: Members of the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

My name is Mitchell Karlan. I am a graduate of Trinity College in Hartford. I have been a Connecticut resident for almost all my adult life.

My former wife and I separated in 1993 after 11 years of marriage. Now, almost twenty years later, I am still paying alimony. Unless a court grants me relief, or the proposed alimony reform bill becomes law, I will be paying until I die.

My former wife had stopped working at the time of the divorce, but immediately went back to work. She quickly developed a successful career and earns more than most residents of this State.

My wife was awarded our home in the divorce, and all of its contents. She kept her own retirement accounts, and was given half of mine.

My former wife and I had five children. The youngest is now 21. I have paid for all their college and graduate school, with more to come. My former wife paid for none of it.

I have since remarried. I have been married to my wife far longer than I was married to my former wife. My continuing alimony payments to a woman I last lived with almost 20 years ago have been a constant stress on my otherwise very happy second marriage. The truth is that, almost 20 years later, I am still not really divorced.

The alimony payments have also prevented my former wife and I from developing a civilized relationship after our divorce. The losers here have been our children. Birthdays, graduations, and weddings are stressful rather than joyous because my former wife, my wife, and I must try to pretend to be friendly even though we are still in conflict.

In my opinion, it is bad policy for the State to give divorced people an economic incentive to not work and succeed, and to not move on with their lives. It also sets a terrible role model for daughters to see their mothers live for years and years dependent on a man to whom she is not married, especially when the mother is fully capable of providing for herself.